DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 054 773 JC 710 238

AUTHOR Eckert, Ruth E.; Williams, Howard Y., Jr.

TITLE The Career Motivations and Satisfactions of Junior College Teachers--A Second Look.

PUB DATE [71]

NOTE 12p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29

DESCRIPTORS Job Satisfaction; *Junior Colleges; *Longitudinal Studies; Questionnaires; *Teacher Characteristics; *Teacher Motivation; *Teacher Role

IDENTIFIERS *Minnesota

ABSTRACT

Minnesota junior college staffs, before and after the colleges joined state-planned and financed programs are described. Findings from an initial 1956 study, compared with a 1968 survey, stress two questions: how teachers in junior college differ from those in other college and university programs, and how current junior college faculty members compare with those on a staff 12 years earlier. Questionnaire data showed that junior college teachers, more than university teachers, come into college teaching more by accident than they do by plan, although this condition has improved since 1956, when "happenstance" played a larger role. Junior college teachers usually begin as high school teachers and pursue graduate work part-time. Doctoral degrees are rare but more are en route than was true in the mid-50s. Reasons given by junior college staff for selecting an academic career show more concern than 4-year staff for students and their educational growth and less interest in research. Junior college duties center on teaching and other student services with little time left for research, professional writing, or off-campus consultant jobs. More than 4/5 of the junior college faculty members sampled are satisfied with their careers, significantly more than in 1956 and now equaling the 4-year colleges. Dissatisfactions focus on a less-than-expected life style, heavy work loads, administrative red tape, inadequate facilities, and lagging salaries. On the whole, the findings suggest that faculties of junior colleges have made substantial gains in 12 years, especially in salary, working conditions, and general satisfaction with the institution. (MN)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED054773

THE CAREER MOTIVATIONS AND SATISFACTIONS OF JUNIOR COLLEGE TEACHERS -- A SECOND LOOK

Ruth E. Eckert and Howard Y. Williams, Jr.

[1971]

JC 710 238

As the most rapidly growing form of American post-high school education, junior colleges present special problems in staffing. The major concern for the 1970's will not lie in finding the requisite numbers of faculty members, as it has been during the past decade, but in attracting persons who truly understand and are qualified to promote the distinctive aims of two-year colleges. In danger of a possible flood of Ph.D.'s frustrated in their efforts to obtain positions in four-year college, junior colleges could easily find their mission subverted. One way to guard against this is to know more about the career motivations and satisfactions of their faculty members in recent years.

The present report describes junior college staff in one state (Minnesota) before and after such institutions became part of a state-planned and financed program of post-high school education. Findings from the initial study, made in 1956,[1] afford significant benchmarks for assessing what happened to the faculties involved, once the state of Minnesota became actively involved (from 1963 on) in promoting this type of education. Most of the questions used in the earlier study were repeated in 1968, along with a few additional queries, in another state-wide study encompassing faculties in Minnesota's 43 recognized institutions of higher education.[2]

Because most of Minnesota's junior colleges have been relatively small, all full-time faculty were contacted in both surveys, rather than the stratified random samples used for those affiliated with liberal arts, professional, and

---

[1]Eckert, Ruth E. and John E. Stecklein, "Career Motivations and Satisfactions of Junior College Teachers", Junior College Journal, 30:83-9, October 1959.

[2]A full report of the recent study is given in Eckert, Ruth E. and Howard Y. Williams, Jr. Minnesota Faculty Members View Themselves and Their Jobs, University of Minnesota, October 1971.

graduate programs. Whereas in 1956 there had been only 11 junior colleges, this number had increased to 20 (16 public and 4 private junior colleges) and the number of faculty members furnishing the requested information (on a four-page printed blank) soared from 130 to 461, constituting 91 and 80 percents respectively of the staffs involved in the two studies.

The analyses reported below, which are based primarily on public junior colleges faculties,[3] throw interesting light on two important questions, namely in what respects persons teaching in junior colleges differ from those affiliated with other college and university programs, and how current junior college faculty members compare with those who were on the staff twelve years earlier. Unless so indicated by the use of "slightly", all differences cited below satisfy at least a five percent level of significance, indicating that they would rarely be found on a chance basis.

Backgrounds. Like their colleagues in four-year colleges,[4] most of these junior college faculty members are men (74 percent, or slightly above the 70 percent figure for the earlier study). Their median age is 41, or four years younger than the 1956 group. Junior college faculty members also are significantly younger than those in other types of programs, with 37 percent under 35 years of age, as compared with 24 percent of the four-year faculty. A higher proportion (81 percent) are married than was true in the mid-1950's, and families are larger, typically including three children.

---

[3]Findings for private junior colleges, which enroll only 12 percent of the students in Minnesota two-year colleges, resemble those for four-year private liberal arts colleges. Because these institutions differ basically in purpose and student clientele from the public colleges, no analyses are reported in the present article.

[4]This term will be used to include all institutions (the 16 private liberal arts colleges, 6 state colleges, and the University of Minnesota) that offer baccalaureate and, in some instances, advanced programs.

Significantly more junior college teachers had been born in Minnesota (56 vs 32 percent of the four-year group), with the rest coming largely from other parts of the north-central area. Although their parents had substantially more formal schooling than had been reported in 1956, almost half of both the fathers and mothers had not finished high school, and only 13 and 9 percents respectively had graduated from college. These are significantly below the correlate figures for four-year staffs.

Junior college faculty also came from homes that ranked relatively low in socio-economic status, with almost half of the fathers reported as farmers, laborers, or clerks, as compared with a third of the four-year college faculty fathers. However, a greater proportion of junior college faculty fathers were in the managerial or business group and fewer in trades and farming than had been the case in 1956. Less often were the mothers reported as having given their full time to household tasks (58 vs 79 percent in the earlier study).

Choice of College Teaching. Like individuals in the other colleges studied, few of the recent junior college faculty reported that they had ever thought, as high school students, of college teaching as a possible career, and just two-fifths said that they had seriously considered this field prior to college graduation, or a slightly higher percent than in 1956. But for a substantial number (24 percent vs 13 percent of the earlier junior college faculty), no thought had been given to this possibility until after receiving their highest degree. Compared with other types of college faculties, prospective junior college teachers had shown considerably more interest, as students, in careers in public school teaching. Thus 41 percent of the individuals recently surveyed reported this as their career goal at entrance to college and 60 percent at graduation.

Future junior college teachers' reasons for finally deciding on college teaching differed somewhat from those of colleagues in four-year institutions.

A significantly larger proportion of the junior college faculty in both 1956 and 1968 (72 and 64 percents respectively) said that they "desired to work with college age students" - a reason less frequently offered by four-year college faculties, particularly members of the University of Minnesota faculty (29 per cent). Compared with the latter faculties, just half the proportion of those in junior colleges (14 vs 27 percent) indicated that the offer of a graduate fellowship had influenced their choice, and only a fourth as many (8 vs 30 percent) specified research opportunities as an important consideration. Similarly, substantially fewer (23 vs 34 percent) stated that they had become so interested in a subject that they wanted to continue its study on a life-time basis. Recent junior college faculty differed from earlier ones in more explicit reference to desirable working conditions, which some contrasted with those of the high schools from which they had come, and their desire to be part of collegiate academic and social life.

About a fourth of the faculty in both junior and four-year colleges noted that some teacher had influenced their choice of a college career. Occasionally this was an elementary or high school teacher; more often a respected undergraduate or graduate professor had advised the student in this direction. Counselors and administrators also played some role but not as significant a one as classroom teachers, whose influence was more evident in the recent study than the earlier one.

Chance happenings were the decisive factor for many faculty members, though, with a higher percentage of junior college teachers than of faculties elsewhere indicating that they "had just drifted into college teaching". This often came about by being approached about a college job they had not sought. As one teacher phrased it, "I had really never thought of being on a college faculty until a former high school principal of mine, now dean at ———

College, offered me a job at his institution". But it is perhaps significant, along with other evidences of better faculty morale recently, that this "chance" factor was cited less frequently by current than earlier junior college staff (36 vs 48 percents respectively).

Preparation for an Academic Career. A third of the current junior college faculty, as compared with half of those in four-year colleges and in the 1956 two-year colleges, had received some type of special honor or recognition as undergraduates. Junior college faculty also ranked lower in terms of financial aid awarded for their graduate studies, with 22 percent, as compared with 39 percent in the four-year colleges, citing scholarships and fellowships, and 21 and 43 percents respectively specifying graduate assistantships. Partly because of the dearth of such aids, most prospective junior college teachers pursued their advanced studies on a part-time basis, with the growing sense of frustration and discouragement that this often brings.

Significantly more of the junior college than of four-year faculty members had taken their baccalaureate and advanced studies at north-central institutions, with six in seven graduating from public colleges and universities. Typically their highest earned degree was at the master's level, though a sixth (16 percent) of the junior college staff, as contrasted with 8 percent of those in four-year colleges, had not yet received an advanced degree. The most pronounced difference was in earned doctorates (2 vs 49 percent), showing that Minnesota junior colleges have been attracting very few persons with the highest earned academic degree. But the figure for junior colleges will undoubtedly increase somewhat, since half of the 30 percent who are still working on degree programs are doctoral candidates. The distribution of staff among subject fields pursued in advanced studies was fairly similar for staffs in the different types of colleges, except for a somewhat greater emphasis in the junior and state colleges on Education majors. The fact that faculty in two-year colleges prepared in much the same

way as the senior college staff did probably reflects the continuing heavy concentration on liberal arts and pre-professional training in Minnesota's junior colleges.

Three-fourths (77 percent) of the junior college faculty had taught prior to joining their present institution, with 70 percent (as compared with 37 percent in four-year colleges) reporting some elementary or secondary school experience -- or the same high proportion found in 1956. About 30 percent had held some type of full-time non-academic job since graduating from college. Since the typical junior college faculty member had taught at the college level for only five years, a great many were still in their earliest years of college teaching. In fact, more than two-fifths (44 percent) were in their first year or two of teaching at their present institutions, as contrasted with 12 percent so reported in the earlier study.

Nature of Present Job. In citing factors that had influenced their decision to teach in their present institutions, junior college faculty members often noted that "a position was available" or that "the salary was satisfactory". But some had been challenged by distinctive characteristics of two-year colleges, that "there is no entrenched academic hierarchy," that "junior colleges are on the move, not held back by tradition", and that "the open door policy promises much for deprived youth." They were apparently less swayed than colleagues elsewhere by the reputation of the school involved, by opportunities to teach courses of particular interest, or by the chance to combine some research with their other duties. Recent junior college faculty appeared to be more impressed with the general atmosphere of their institutions, including the greater freedom and independence collegiate programs provide, than their colleagues had been twelve years ago.

Once on the job, their professional activities continued to differ, as they had in 1956, from those reported by staff members in other types of

institutions. Junior college teachers estimated that they gave a very high percentage of their working time to teaching (80 vs 55 for the four-year staff.) Other student services, such as counseling and work with various clubs and sports, claimed a little less time than in 1956. Committee services mortgaged about the same amount of time in all types of institutions, but junior college faculty reported far less time invested in research and other scholarly activities. Three-fourths (77 percent) reported no involvement at all of this type, or about the same proportion (76 percent) as in 1956. This is hardly surprising in view of their heavy course loads and substantial campus and community responsibilities, with the latter sometimes involving several talks a month to civic and business groups.

If they could modify their present distribution of working hours, most junior college faculty members (62 vs 40 percent for the four-year colleges) said that they would like to spend still more time on teaching, counseling, and other student services. This contrasts sharply with the stress which most faculty members elsewhere would give to research, specified by less than half as many junior colleges as four-year faculty and by significantly fewer (24 vs 33 percent) of the current than earlier members of junior college staffs.

When queried about activities that might receive less time, almost two-fifths of both the junior and four-year college groups suggested no change in their time allotments, or a substantially higher percent than appeared satisfied in 1956. Another two-fifths of both groups thought that committee and administrative tasks should be curtailed. Supporting comments suggested that many had been run ragged with committee assignments that had consumed a good deal of time but produced little constructive action.

Other Scholarly and Consultant Activities. Included in the current but not earlier study were a series of questions probing attendance at professional

meetings and involvement in research, writing, and consultant services. No differences were noted between two- and four-year staffs on attendance at various types of institutes and conferences, with two per year typically reported, but expectedly large differences emerged with respect to the other points investigated. Only an occasional junior college faculty member (4 percent) had published a book or chapter in a book during the preceding five years, and just one in eight (12 percent) claimed at least one professional article during this period. In view of their high involvement in teaching, it was surprising that only 14 percent reported preparation of study guides for their courses. Just a fifth of the two-year college staff reported off-campus consultant activities or grants for research, in contrast to the involvement of almost half of the four-year college staffs in such projects.

Appraisal of Career Choice. Regardless of type of institution, most faculty members seemed to be quite satisfied with their present careers and anxious to continue in them. Rather interestingly, current junior college faculty gave their career choice a more enthusiastic endorsement than their colleagues had done in 1956 (44 percent characterized themselves as "very satisfied", as compared with 31 percent in the earlier study, and most of the rest said that they were "satisfied"). They also seemed more ready (82 vs 69 percent) to reaffirm this choice, given a chance to do so. Whereas in 1956 a sizeable number (14 percent) of the junior college faculty said that they would not again select their present career, this negative judgment was expressed by only one percent of the current staff. The remaining persons either said that they were undecided or failed to respond to this question.

Junior college faculties seem to derive their chief job satisfactions from their teaching activities. Particularly noted in the free comments made on

this point was the stimulus they derive from working with many well-motivated students - a situation that seems to have impressed persons who had been troubled by discipline problems in their earlier high school teaching. As one teacher wrote, "Few satisfactions compare with the pleasure of helping a student lift the veil of obscurity and expand the horizon of his understanding." Also noted were values accruing from "being among knowledgeable and professional persons." But less frequent mention was made by junior than senior faculties of benefits associated with the intellectual stimulation and general academic tone of their institutions. About one in seven cited the freedom they enjoyed as college teachers..." you are left to do things pretty much your own way... you don't have to be a clock-watcher".

Faculty members in all types of colleges identified fewer dissatisfactions than satisfactions with their jobs, though equal opportunity was provided to do both these things. The most notable drop in complaints related to inadequate salaries, with only 10 percent of the recent junior college staff citing this, as compared with 44 percent earlier. Frustrations more often expressed by recent than earlier respondents centered around poor attitudes on the part of some colleagues (reflected in such comments as "petty faculty and administrative politics," "rigidity", and "too much back-biting among so called professional personnel"), inadequate facilities, and excessively long work hours. Many felt that their teaching schedules too often resembled those of the lower schools, that "crushing work loads make it impossible to get to know many students individually."

Quite a number of faculty members commented on the routine tasks often assigned them, such as taking tickets at games and handling details that clerks or secretaries could manage. As one teacher wrote, "Faculty members should not continue to waste time on tasks that another 'less expensive' individual could

do as well or better." They also noted that leaves are seldom granted for further study and that the public at large typically shows scant understanding of what junior colleges are really trying to do. Due to the extensive building programs, there was much less criticism than in the mid-1950's of housing junior college classes in high school buildings.

To correct some of these problems, particularly those relating to work overloads and salaries, most junior college faculty members favor collective bargaining. More than three-fifths (62 percent) judged this approach "highly desirable" or "desirable", with most of the rest uncertain. Probably because of experiences many of them had had with such negotiations in the lower schools, their attitudes on this point were much more favorable than those of faculties in four-year colleges. Some wrote, in support of this position "What other way is there?" or "It's long overdue!" Certain qualifications were sometimes added, such as "I don't advocate striking at the expense of students, but any other collective action to improve working conditions and salaries is acceptable" and "The state professional organization should be the agent. A strike is ethical only as a last resort. I favor NEA sanctions where needed."

Suggestions for Recruiting and Holding Qualified Staff. Perhaps because they did not perceive these problems to be as critical now as in the mid-1950's, faculty members in all types of institutions made many fewer proposals relating to staffing than their colleagues twelve years earlier had done. Substantial hikes in salaries were still proposed, though not by the very high percentages who had earlier cited this (46 percent of recent junior college faculty vs 72 percent in the earlier study). Also frequently suggested were the need to lighten work loads and to provide other conditions favorable to superior professional service. Probably reflecting on their own experience, quite a number urged that graduate work be done earlier and with rather specific

pointing toward careers in junior colleges. More concern was also shown currently for faculty involvement in policy making ("give teachers more voice in the curriculum" and "encourage freedom of expression and decision-making without fear") and for rewarding good teaching, (evidenced by such statements as "reward the superior teacher irrespective of the degree held" and "respect good teachers rather than promote them to other jobs!??") Several strong pleas were also made for "developing a better public image for the junior college" and "cultivating a more understanding attitude toward faculty by the community".

Summary and Implications. The present report, which is largely based on questionnaire data obtained from Minnesota public junior college faculty members in 1956 and 1968, reveals some important facts about the staffs recruited to these programs.

1. Junior college teachers, to an even greater degree than others, come into college teaching by accident rather than by deliberate planning for such a career. But conditions in this respect have improved somewhat from the mid-1950's, when "happenstance" played a still larger role.

2. They usually begin their service as high school teachers and pursue whatever graduate work they take on a part-time basis. Rarely do they have a doctor's degree, though more teachers currently are enroute to this than was true in 1956.

3. In the reasons they give for selecting an academic career, they show a stronger concern than four-year staffs do for students and their educational development, and a lesser one for research and other scholarly activities. In both junior and four-year colleges, faculty members also seem to be increasingly attracted because this promises a congenial style of life.

4. Their duties chiefly center around teaching and other student services, with loads characteristically so heavy that they find little time or inclination for further studies in their own field, research, professional writing, or consultant jobs beyond the campus. The situation here has apparently not improved since the mid-1950's.

5. Despite formidable handicaps to rendering their best services, more than four-fifths of these junior college faculty members say that they are satisfied with their careers and wish to continue in this field. The level of satisfaction was significantly higher than in 1956, now equaling that found in the four-year colleges.

6. Their patterns of satisfaction vary somewhat from those characterizing faculty in advanced programs, chiefly in the greater stress that junior college staff give to rewards associated with their teaching. Much less often cited are those deriving from intellectual stimulation, research, and beyond-the-campus professional associations. Dissatisfactions focus chiefly around things which place constraints on the expected life style, such as unsatisfactory colleague relationships, heavy work loads, administration red tape, inadequate facilities and lagging salaries. Junior college faculty also note the lack of public understanding and appreciation of the special services that two-year colleges render.

Viewed as a whole, the findings of this study suggest that faculties of junior colleges have made substantial strides in the twelve years, especially with respect to salary, working conditions, and general satisfaction with the type of institution involved. Teaching in these institutions has clearly become a more attractive career prospect. Yet much needs to be done to foster the staff's full professional development. Constituted largely of native Minnesotans who also received much of their training in the north-central area, they tend to be "locals" rather than "cosmopolitans" in their educational outlook. Hence they stand in special need of reductions in teaching load, greater provision for leaves that might encourage travel and study in other places, and generous support for innovative teaching efforts. Only as junior colleges take strong steps to develop their staffs' potential will they fulfill their distinctive mission in American higher education.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

NOV 10 1971

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION